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New York

President:	Mr. Türk	(Slovenia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Al-Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Fonseca
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Sergeev
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was resumed at 3.10 p.m.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the initiative that you have taken to organize this meeting. We are also grateful to Mr. Fall for his very useful briefing.

The situation in Burundi is a source of concern for my delegation. Notwithstanding the enormous time and energy invested by the international community to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, there is yet to be a breakthrough.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere for his preponderant role and invaluable contribution in the Arusha process. With the demise of Mwalimu Nyerere and the resumption of hostilities, it would appear that the Burundian factions are even further away from peace. There is therefore an urgent need to redouble efforts with a view to salvaging the flagging peace process.

As a first step, a facilitator should be identified as soon as possible to continue the important work started by Mwalimu Nyerere. The new facilitator should be someone of high calibre, morally and politically. A former African head of State, if possible, agreeable to the Burundian parties, would be the ideal choice.

We note with keen interest that the parties concerned are already considering some personalities and that they will be discussed at the upcoming summit of the countries of the Great Lakes region. We encourage them, in consultation with the United Nations and all the parties concerned, to reach an agreement on a facilitator as quickly as possible.

The Arusha process, through its committees, has made progress in many areas. The work of these committees should be continued. We cannot afford to start the process all over again. It is our view that we should build on what has been achieved already rather than going back to square one, especially at this time, when more and more civilians are being targeted.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that not even humanitarian and United Nations personnel are spared. This state of affairs is unacceptable to the international community. We are outraged by these barbaric and despicable acts committed against civilians, both local and international. We therefore condemn the attack in Rutana and all attacks against unarmed non-combatants. We call on the authorities in Burundi to investigate these incidents and to prosecute those responsible with the full vigour of the law.

We must emphasize that it is the responsibility of every Government to ensure the protection of its citizens. We understand the concerns of the Government of Burundi, but we fear that putting people in camps, away from their farms, may not be the best solution. We understand the constraints of the Government, but there might be better alternatives. Having heard from the Permanent Representative of Burundi this morning that this is only a temporary measure, our fears have now been allayed, and we look forward to the early return of the families concerned to their respective homes.

The humanitarian situation in the country is deteriorating very rapidly. The belligerents are not helping the situation, either. With the recent trend of calculated attacks against humanitarian personnel, the corridors for the delivery of humanitarian assistance are shrinking significantly. We urge all sides to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of all humanitarian personnel.

The presence of combatants in refugee camps is also a source of grave concern to us. This unfortunate state of affairs has been largely responsible for the numerous reports of executions. The civilian character of refugee camps must be respected by all concerned.

The latest report on the food situation in Burundi is very bleak, and it is feared that next season will not be any better. Relief assistance is therefore badly needed to avert an imminent humanitarian crisis.

In the same vein, it is worrisome for my delegation to note that, notwithstanding the lifting of the sanctions against Burundi, the economic situation continues to deteriorate. My delegation wholeheartedly supports the expansion of aid to the Government of Burundi. We therefore appeal to the donor community to resume assistance to Burundi as soon as possible.

It cannot be gainsaid that the present civil war in Burundi is hampering economic development. The belligerents must understand this fact and stop their people from suffering any further. They must get their acts together, lay down their arms and negotiate genuinely and in good faith for a final settlement. This would be a welcome tribute to the memory of Mwalimu Nyerere. In this way, his efforts will not have gone in vain. We hope that the Burundian parties will see reason

and heed the call of the rest of the international community.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and this open debate. I also wish to thank the Ambassador of Burundi for the comprehensive information he provided for us this morning.

We commend the Secretary-General's efforts in coordination with countries in the region to revive the Arusha peace process. The situation in Burundi remains a matter of great concern, as it poses a major threat to peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

The report presented a few days ago by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, provides a clear picture of a tragic humanitarian situation. A lasting solution to the crisis in Burundi can be found only through political and diplomatic means. We reaffirm our support for the efforts of African leaders to achieve a negotiated solution to this conflict.

The Arusha peace process has been a relevant tool to promote political dialogue in Burundi and should continue to receive strong support from the United Nations and the international community. We regret that the late Mediator of the Arusha process, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, can no longer make his valuable contribution to the peace talks, and we look forward to the timely appointment of his successor. Peace in the Great Lakes region will be the best tribute to his inspiring struggle for justice and development in Africa.

We deplore the acts of violence committed against humanitarian personnel in Burundi and the murder of two United Nations aid personnel last October. In the light of the recent upsurge of violence, the United Nations must stand ready to react to a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. All parties concerned must refrain from all acts of violence and commit themselves without delay to a broad-based political dialogue with a view to establishing conditions conducive to national reconciliation, democracy and the rule of law. For its part, the international community should be prepared to provide support to the peace process and assistance to the subsequent rehabilitation of the country.

I wish to recall that in March 1996, by adopting resolution 1049 (1996), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to intensify the preparations for convening a regional conference for peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region in order to address the issues of political and economic stability, as well as peace and security in that region. Unfortunately, as the security situation in the region deteriorated the necessary consultations for convening such a conference could not be undertaken.

We continue to support this proposal, on the understanding that such a conference, convened under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of Africa Unity, would contribute to the search for comprehensive solutions to problems affecting the entire region — such as poverty, economic stagnation, arms trafficking, the flow of refugees and the persistence of violence.

We look forward to the report of the visit by Under-Secretary-General Prendergast to the countries in the region. We hope that his report will provide the basis for a greater involvement of the United Nations in Burundi.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): My delegation would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this open meeting to address the situation in Burundi. Not only has this situation destabilized the whole country, but its impact has gone beyond its borders. It is in this context that we extend our appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall for the informative briefing provided to us.

The Great Lakes region is besieged by many problems that require the collective will, efforts and support of the international community. We are deeply concerned at the increasing violence and instability in Burundi. We are also concerned at the plight of the refugees who are fleeing continuing fighting between the rebels and Government forces.

It is disheartening to know that innocent civilians are the main victims of this conflict. They are forced to flee their homes in search of safety or have been forced into *regroupement* camps where humanitarian conditions are appalling and where there is no adequate shelter or water supply. Worse still, some of these camps are inaccessible to humanitarian organizations.

We pay tribute to the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere for the leadership he provided and the tireless efforts he made in bringing the parties to the negotiating table. We cannot fail to recognize the role played by the United Republic of Tanzania in the Burundi peace process.

Indeed, Tanzania has extended its hospitality to many Burundian refugees, just as it did to many Namibians during the days when we were fighting for the independence of our country. Today, Tanzania, a least developed country, continues to play host to about 300,000 refugees from Burundi. Tanzania continues to bear this burden despite meagre resources. We hope that it will continue to play a positive role in the negotiations.

We encourage the parties in Burundi to continue in earnest with the negotiations in a bid to find a peaceful solution to the country's civil strife. We call upon those who have not been participating to join the process so that peace can be found for all the people of Burundi. In the same vein, it is important that the fighting stop, so that all efforts are concentrated on a negotiated settlement. We very much regret that it might not be possible for such a settlement to be reached by the end of the year, but we are hopeful that this will take place early during the new millennium. We encourage the parties to resolve the question of a successor to former President Nyerere, so as to fill the vacuum caused by his untimely death, allow the process to move forward and bring an end to the suffering of the people of Burundi.

Let me emphasize that only inclusion of all the people of Burundi — irrespective of ethnicity — in the political, economic and social development process of the country can bring peace to Burundi. It is up to the people of Burundi to muster the courage and will to foster mutual accommodation and acceptance. The international community can only assist.

We call on the donor community to continue to support the Arusha negotiations and to provide resources and assistance for addressing the humanitarian needs of the population in need of such assistance.

Namibia condemns the killing of two expatriate United Nations workers in the Rutana province on 12 October this year, deaths that led to the suspension of United Nations humanitarian activities. We hope that these activities will resume as soon as security conditions permit. Furthermore, it is important that investigations into the killings are carried out and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for having sent the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to Burundi and other countries in and outside the region to consult with their leaders on the situation in the country and the United Nations role in helping with the peace process. We look forward to the outcome of his visit.

The President: I thank the representative of Namibia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is grateful to you, Sir, for having been so kind as to organize this debate on the situation in Burundi.

It is regrettable that some of the parties in Burundi, taking advantage of the vacuum created by the tragic death of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the Facilitator of the inter-Burundi talks, deemed it necessary to break the ceasefire and relaunch the civil war. The delegation of Gabon condemns this attitude and urges all those who, overcome by despair, have resorted to the use of force to return immediately to the way of negotiation and dialogue. In our view only these means can lead to a lasting settlement of the crises now shaking not only Burundi but all of the Great Lakes region. This is why my delegation remains convinced that the full implementation of the Lusaka Agreement would also promote the resolution of the situation in Burundi.

We ask all of those who are involved in the peace process in Burundi to reach agreement as quickly as possible on the choice of a new Facilitator, and that all the Burundian parties be closely involved in the search for peace.

Experience, indeed, has shown that those who are considered small factions and have no authority to influence the course of events have most frequently been at the root of problems of insecurity and instability that are delaying the normal conduct of the peace process.

In this regard the delegation of Gabon reiterates its condemnation of the murder of staff members of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, which took place on 12 October 1999 in the province of Rutana. We welcome the Government of Burundi's investigation aimed at finding the perpetrators of this act and bringing them to justice.

The cycle of violence resuming in Burundi is a source of serious concern because it is increasing the number of victims, in particular children and women, and unleashing a large flow of refugees into the neighbouring countries. We urge our brothers in Burundi to make a reality of the solemn commitment they undertook in Arusha on 21 June 1998 by signing the declaration following the first round of negotiations, in which they said:

> "Aware of our historic responsibility, we share the same conviction that we owe it to the Burundian people, both present and future generations, to create a climate of lasting peace in our country and to put an end to the constant cycle of violence and fratricide that has long afflicted Burundi,
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> "Aware of the suffering of our people, we are determined to exercise, individually and collectively, responsible leadership with the aim of putting an end to this suffering and creating the conditions for peaceful coexistence on the basis of democratic values and security for all". (*S/1998/562, annex I, p. 3*)

To act in any other way would provide excuses to those who remain reluctant to join the efforts at reconstruction and economic and social development undertaken by the Government and the people of Burundi.

The Secretary-General's report of April 1998 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa stressed the need to provide aid and significant assistance to countries in conflict. The state of poverty and the lack of development which they must often endure can damage the efforts undertaken to restore peace and stability in the countries involved.

The President: I thank the representative of Gabon for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation commends you, Sir, for convening this open meeting of the Council to consider the situation in Burundi. We believe that the participation of the larger membership of the Organization will contribute positively to the process of Council consideration of the subject.

We appreciate the briefing given this morning by Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall on the current situation in Burundi. We were dismayed to learn from Mr. Fall and from other sources that the situation on the political, economic and humanitarian fronts remains very bad and very disturbing. It is therefore imperative that the international community and this Council redouble their efforts to nudge the peace process forward and to encourage the Burundian parties to work together for an enduring political settlement. We hope that today's open meeting of the Council will provide the necessary impetus for these efforts.

My delegation does not believe that a lasting solution of the Burundian conflict can be attained through military means. In this regard, we note with concern the current impasse in the political dialogue. We urge the international community, particularly the regional States, to continue to galvanize efforts to bring the parties together to end the fighting and to commit themselves to the political process. We urge the Burundians to search for a lasting solution to their tragic conflict at the negotiating table rather than on the battlefront.

Like other members of the Council, Malaysia fully supports the initiatives of the regional leaders and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to assist Burundi in finding a negotiated settlement to the conflict. We welcome the African lead, while believing that the Security Council and the international community also have equally vital roles to play. In this context, we wish to pay tribute to the memory of the late former President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, whose untimely death has left a vacuum which must be filled as soon as possible so as not to lose the momentum that he generated with his tireless efforts. It is imperative, therefore, that the current consultations among leaders in the region to find a new Facilitator result in an early decision. Time is of the essence. But it is equally important to find someone with the energy, dedication and stature of the late Mwalimu — one who can command the respect and confidence of the parties.

We believe that the Arusha peace process remains the most viable avenue towards achieving lasting peace. We were dismayed to hear of the polarization that has emerged among the Burundian parties and would urge them not to lose faith in the Arusha process. We believe that, while the hurdles are significant, they are not insurmountable. The mediation efforts of the new Facilitator must be given every chance to succeed, representing as they do the most realistic opportunity for pursuing dialogue among the key players. The momentum towards peace generated during the early stages of the Arusha peace process must not be allowed to grind to a halt.

We note with grave concern that, as in many other conflicts, the unfortunate victims of the conflict in Burundi are the innocent civilians who are caught in the middle. The deteriorating security situation, following an escalation of violence in rural areas, has resulted in large-scale population displacement and forced a suspension of humanitarian assistance. While every effort should be made by the international community to resolve

the conflict at the political-diplomatic level, there is an urgent need to ensure continued humanitarian assistance to the affected population so as to avoid further hardship and loss of lives. The situation on the economic front is also a matter of serious concern. Earlier expectations of improvements in the economy following the removal of the economic embargo by Burundi's neighbours have failed to materialize, due mainly to the continuing violence and insecurity.

Unimpeded provision of and access to humanitarian assistance are imperative if the situation in Burundi is to be stabilized. Further human displacements will have serious ramifications for peace and security throughout the Great Lakes region. Preventing them should therefore be a high priority of the international community. Malaysia condemns the attack on the humanitarian mission in Rutana province on 12 October resulting in the tragic death of two representatives of United Nations agencies. We welcome the decision by the Government of Burundi to institute a thorough investigation of the incident and the subsequent prosecution of those responsible.

Narrow sectarian interests must give way to the larger interests and concerns of the Burundian people at large. The international community can no longer allow acts of unbridled violence to continue with impunity. Those who commit serious violations of international humanitarian law should be held responsible for crimes against humanity. We also note that the recent spate of attacks on civilians has resulted in the Government of Burundi's resettling some 130,000 people in *regroupement* camps, as confirmed by Assistant Secretary-General Fall during his briefing. Although such drastic measures are prompted by safety and security considerations and may well have resulted in an improvement in the security situation, we would urge that the needs and welfare of the people placed in such camps be fully assured and adequately provided. In any case, they should be allowed to return to their villages and homes as soon as possible.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to underscore that the responsibility for ending the conflict lies with the Burundian people themselves, particularly their leaders. The genuine political commitment of the leaders is imperative if a process of political dialogue is to succeed. We call on all Burundians to end their ethnic and factional differences in the larger interest of their country. They must seize the opportunity provided by the Arusha process and begin the task of rebuilding a united nation under a constitution which enjoys the widest possible support. The memory of the many Burundians who have perished and that of Mwalimu Nyerere and his efforts should inspire them to succeed.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): A year ago, when the Netherlands joined this Council, Burundi was often referred to as a shimmer of light in a region of darkest conflict. Regional sanctions were subsequently lifted, and it was expected that by the end of this year the Arusha peace process would result in an overall settlement.

Today I cannot but express the Netherlands' extreme concern about the present situation in Burundi. Extremist forces have gained new ground, and in this atmosphere two United Nations staff were recently killed, one of whom was a Dutch national. The perpetrators of these murders must be brought to justice.

Amidst these deteriorating security conditions, the humanitarian situation continues to worsen. We call upon all parties to respect the relevant rules of international humanitarian law. The neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian assistance must be respected and everything possible must be done to guarantee the safety of those who deliver this assistance.

While we appreciate that a degenerating security situation may call for exceptional measures, we do not believe that the forced regrouping of the rural population is an acceptable response. At any rate, we wish to remind the authorities concerned that, by virtue of this policy, the Government of Burundi has assumed full responsibility for the safety and well-being of those who have been regrouped against their will.

The untimely death of President Nyerere and the subsequent interruption of the Arusha peace process could not have occurred at a more inopportune time. The Arusha peace process must be resumed as soon as possible. We hope the parties concerned will soon be able to identify a successor to Mr. Nyerere so that a dangerous vacuum may be avoided. All parties must gear their efforts towards an early resumption of the negotiations. The Netherlands stands ready to continue its support for the Arusha peace process.

The situation in Burundi is cause for broader concern because of its potentially dangerous implications for the entire region. The Arusha process and the Lusaka process are intertwined: they are dependent on each other's success. There is no hope for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo if there is no prospect

of stability based on reconciliation in its neighbouring countries to the east.

In conclusion, I wish to confirm that the Netherlands associates itself with the statement the representative of Finland will deliver on behalf of the European Union.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of Slovenia.

I would like to begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahim Fall for his briefing today. His briefing and other information that we are receiving show that this debate is indeed timely.

Burundi is a situation of grave political crisis and one where a humanitarian drama is evolving. We have learned about 10,000 refugees since the beginning of October, a number which has to be added to 300,000 refugees in Tanzania and about 800,000 internally displaced persons in Burundi. The reports which we receive from the United Nations Children's Fund speak about the very rapidly deteriorating health situation of children. One of the illustrations is that of 287 health centres, which barely deliver basic health services, 30 have been closed. If this trend continues, the situation will become much worse. Hence, there is a reason for saying that this is a timely debate and for pointing out that this tragedy has to be stopped.

Today's open debate can also be considered timely because it is an opportunity for the Security Council to reconfirm its support for the Arusha peace process. Every speaker this afternoon and this morning has expressed regret over the unfortunate, untimely passing of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the Facilitator of the Arusha peace process. Ambassador van Walsum said that many of us had expectations at the beginning of the year that the peace process in Arusha would be completed by the end of this year, and now we know that that goal will not be realized. Now it is clear that peace efforts for the restoration of constitutional rule and the promotion of peace and reconciliation will have to continue next year.

The appointment of a new facilitator is a task of critical importance, and we share the disappointment over the fact that the appointment has been postponed again. We think that this is a priority task which has to be pursued vigorously. Furthermore, we believe that it is essential that all parties be given the opportunity and that they participate. A peace agreement which does not enjoy the support of all the players in Burundi will be meaningless and will probably not be accepted by the entire population.

Another basic problem which needs to be mentioned, and has been mentioned by everybody in the discussion today, is that of the safety and security of international personnel. The sad events of 12 October 1999, when we learned about the attack on an inter-agency evaluation mission which was visiting a camp of displaced persons in the province of Rutana, near the border of Tanzania, showed how fragile and precarious is the situation in the country, and how persistent is the violence. We believe that every effort needs to be made to bring the perpetrators to justice and to take the experience of this tragic event as yet further proof of the need to reinvigorate the peace process in Arusha.

The problems are many and they are frightening, and the Security Council must be able to react. We hope that the visit of the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Kieran Prendergast, will bring fresh information, new ideas and proposals as to how the Security Council can contribute to the overall efforts and how the United Nations can support the efforts of the regional organizations. We hope that the Council will be ready not only to follow events, but also to act when necessary and make proposals or recommendations as appropriate.

I shall now resume my function as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Finland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kääriäinen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on Burundi. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

With our message today to the Security Council, we want to express our serious concern about the slow pace of progress in the peace process and to deplore the deterioration in the security, humanitarian and human rights situation in Burundi and its regional implications. These developments call for even more active engagement by the international community and by the

leaders in the region. We should continue to support Burundi and its people. We look forward to possible recommendations from Under-Secretary-General Prendergast when he returns from his mission to the region.

We had hoped that this year would have seen the conclusion of a general peace agreement in Burundi. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The current situation is in stark contrast to that of a year ago, when the international community regarded Burundi as a good example of a peace process in the Great Lakes region.

The death of His Excellency Mwalimu Julius Nyerere was an enormous setback to the Arusha peace process. The European Union acknowledges his pivotal role as the Facilitator who tirelessly worked towards peace and reconciliation. He is greatly missed. Nevertheless, the European Union considers it to be of the greatest importance that the talks continue while a new Facilitator is agreed upon.

The European Union welcomes the news that regional leaders are due to discuss the future of the Burundi peace process. The EU urges all parties involved to reach an agreement rapidly on a new Facilitator and a format for the deliberations. The European Union is of the view that the continuing peace process must be based on the progress and results already achieved in Arusha. We also note with satisfaction that the Burundian Government has publicly announced its commitment to the process.

The European Union reaffirms its support for the internal negotiations and the Arusha peace process, which are fundamental elements in the search for a sustainable solution to the Burundian crisis. The European Union encourages all Burundi rebel movements to join the Arusha peace process so that the parties will choose the path of negotiation rather than that of violence and conflict. The Union is convinced that there can be no military solution and that lasting peace in Burundi can be achieved only through a negotiated settlement.

The European Union deeply deplores the renewed outbreak of indiscriminate violence in Burundi, the main victims of which continue to be the people of that country. We call once again on all the Burundian parties and other armed groups in the region to immediately end all acts of violence in Burundi. The EU urges that the neutrality of refugee camps in the region be assured. It calls upon States in the region to prevent the use of their territory to stage attacks against neighbouring States.

The European Union strongly condemns the targeting of civilian populations, including refugees and humanitarian organizations. In the struggle between the armed forces and the rebels, the victims are mostly women, children and the elderly. The European Union is particularly outraged at the attack on the humanitarian mission in Rutana province in October. It was shocked by the massacre of several members of that mission, Burundians and expatriates, including two representatives of United Nations agencies. We call for the perpetrators of this massacre to be brought to justice. The humanitarian community's ability to distribute aid is being severely hampered by the violence.

The European Union is deeply alarmed that, as a consequence of the latest outbreak of violence, the number of refugees and displaced persons has risen dramatically, putting at risk the lives and well-being of a large part of the population, especially the most vulnerable groups. More than 1.1 million Burundians have been displaced since the beginning of the conflict in 1993. The European Union is particularly concerned about the recent forced removals by the Burundi army of some 300,000 civilians in the countryside around Bujumbura. We deplore the violation of human rights, the loss of human life and the destruction of property which have been the hallmark of this operation. We regret the anguish and suffering to which the civilian population were subjected during their forced transfer to the assembly areas. The European Union calls upon the Burundi Government to call a halt to the policy of forced removals and to allow the people to return to their homes as quickly as possible. In the meantime, it urges that Government to provide the people with improved sanitary and temporary accommodation conditions.

The bleak picture painted by the humanitarian organizations in Burundi is coupled with a warning that the situation will deteriorate. The humanitarian community is warning that levels of malnutrition are on the rise, particularly among children, and that the risk of epidemics, aided by the lack of sanitation and safe drinking water, is threatening the general population.

The European Union reiterates its appeal to all parties to respect human rights and international humanitarian law, to cooperate with humanitarian organizations in the delivery of emergency relief assistance and the protection of civilians and to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of their personnel, as well as access to affected populations. We note that the Burundi Government has assured representatives of

the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations free access to all of the camps concerned to enable them to provide humanitarian assistance. The EU looks to the Burundi authorities to provide security guarantees for personnel of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations and to continue to afford the Burundi Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its observers the same access.

The European Union also notes with interest a plan for reform of the judicial and penitentiary system prepared by the Government of Burundi, and it welcomes the adoption of the new code of criminal procedure which will enter into force next year. The EU emphasizes the importance of the fight against impunity and urges the Government of Burundi to accelerate investigations relating to human rights violations, especially those where army units have been involved, and to bring those responsible to justice.

The international community cannot be passive about the situation in Burundi. All international actors have to use the means at their disposal to contribute to the stabilization of the country. The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to extend the United Nations political presence in Burundi until the end of December 2000. The European Union considers that the United Nations presence can contribute positively to a peaceful settlement of the conflict. It remains ready to support the United Nations Secretary-General and the Secretariat in their task of facilitating the restoration of constitutional rule and to promote peace and reconciliation and the rule of law. The EU calls upon the Government of Burundi to continue its cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, in particular with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Security Council has a special role in helping Burundi and its citizens to find a peaceful solution to this crisis.

In accordance with the "enhanced humanitarian" strategy decided at the donors' meetings in Ottawa and New York, the European Union gave 15 million euros in humanitarian assistance in 1998, and this year it has dedicated approximately 10 million euros. In addition, bilateral contributions have been made.

Furthermore, two suspended development projects will be reactivated, and 48 million euros are allocated for a rehabilitation programme targeted at the resettlement and reintegration of displaced persons. The European Union has supported the Arusha peace process financially, and we call upon States also to give their financial support for this process.

We stand ready to provide further support for the reconciliation, reconstruction and democratization of Burundi. In this context, the willingness and readiness of the parties to fully engage themselves in the peace process play a pivotal role.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): I would like to begin by expressing our appreciation to your Presidency, Sir, for the initiative to hold an open debate in the Security Council on the situation in Burundi.

Norway is deeply concerned by the recent increase in violence in Burundi, in particular in the south and in the environs of Bujumbura. We believe that this spiral of violence must be stopped.

The international community has a special responsibility to prevent another human tragedy from happening in this region. Norway therefore believes that the United Nations should and could play a more active role in ensuring peace and stability in Burundi.

Norway has for several years actively supported the peace and reconciliation efforts in Burundi and has also been one of the major financial contributors to the Arusha process. So far this year we have channelled $4.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Burundi. Another $4.7 million has been channelled through the United Nations system to the Great Lakes region in response to United Nations regional appeals. Taking into account the present severe situation and the need for supporting the humanitarian efforts to restore peace in Burundi, we are now also considering additional support in the near future.

The demise of Mwalimu Nyerere was met with great sorrow. His leadership, as the first head of State of the United Republic of Tanzania and as a peacemaker in the region, made lasting contributions to a better world. He will be greatly missed by us all.

My Government is concerned that his passing at this critical juncture in the peace negotiations on Burundi could lead to a vacuum in the efforts for peace and reconciliation, which could further aggravate the security situation in Burundi and cause a new escalation of violence. We also fear that the violence in Burundi may spread to neighbouring States and create increased instability in the region at large. We therefore strongly

urge all the parties concerned to join in the effort to appoint, as soon as possible, a new facilitator to replace the late Mwalimu Nyerere, and also to resume without any delay the peace talks in Arusha in a constructive manner in order to overcome the present dangerous standstill in the peace process.

It is important to see the present situation in Burundi in the context of political events elsewhere in the Great Lakes region, in particular in the light of the still volatile situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It will be difficult to ensure peace and reconciliation in Burundi if the Lusaka Agreement is not effectively implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are therefore concerned by the recent reports of an increasing number of violations of the ceasefire in that country. We urge all the parties to the Lusaka Agreement to respect the commitments they have made in this respect, and we also urge the Security Council to follow the situation in that country with close attention.

The President: I thank the representative of Norway for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bandora (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation joins others in commending you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. We similarly wish to commend the Council for its continued interest in the situation in Burundi, and we thank Assistant Secretary-General Fall for the extensive briefing he gave the Council.

For our country, this meeting carries a special significance coming as it does on the last day of the national mourning following the demise of our founding President, the late Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere who, in his capacity as Facilitator, tirelessly worked in pursuit of a peaceful settlement to the problems facing Burundi. The most fitting tribute the Council can bestow on his memory is to rededicate itself to the resolute search for a lasting solution the conflict in that country.

The situation in Burundi remains tense and challenging. It remains a situation characterized by violence and human suffering. It remains challenging to Burundi itself, to the subregion, to Africa, to the international community and, in this case, to the Security Council.

The Council is convening against the background of two major developments, namely, the death of the Facilitator of the Burundi peace negotiations within the framework of the Arusha talks and the deepening crisis in that country. It is therefore incumbent upon the Council to take stock of where the efforts for a negotiated settlement in Burundi stand and what can be done to reinforce them in a manner that will reinvigorate and push the peace process begun at Arusha further.

On 21 June 1998, when the all-party talks began in Arusha, the participants in the Burundi peace negotiations, including all the parties to the Burundi conflict, signed a declaration of principles and intent. In the declaration, the signatories committed themselves to engaging in serious negotiations until a just and lasting solution to the crisis in their country was reached, to resolving the crisis through peaceful means and to putting an end to all forms of violence; and they declared a suspension of hostilities. In the declaration, the parties also identified and agreed on five bodies of issues which were to be discussed and decided to establish a committee to deal with each issue. For the record, the five broad areas of negotiations were, first, the nature of the conflict in Burundi, the problems of genocide and exclusion and their solution; secondly, democracy and good governance, constitutional arrangements, questions of justice and the fight against impunity, the judiciary, the system of administration and transitional institutions; thirdly, peace and security for all, issues of public security and defence, cessation of hostilities and permanent ceasefire arrangements; fourthly, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, economic and social reconstruction and development; and, fifthly, guarantees on implementation of the agreement emanating from the Burundi peace negotiations.

Since the convening of the second and substantive session of the negotiations in July 1998, and the beginning of work by the committees, considerable work has been done. The principle of negotiation is firmly established, and the parties have managed to sustain the Arusha mechanism for those negotiations. Armed hostilities have, unfortunately, not ended but the negotiations have continued.

The countries of the region have taken note of the disposition of the Burundi parties — in particular of the Government — to negotiate, and has supported them. It is in this regard, and in recognition of the progress made,

that the region collectively decided to suspend the sanctions against Burundi in January this year.

As a neighbour of Burundi, our overriding interest is in seeing to it that the Arusha process, which was so painstakingly put together and which has made appreciable progress until now, is sustained and steadily brought to a comprehensive conclusion.

There will be accusations, as there have frequently been against my country, that we support and harbour armed elements operating against Burundi. This is an allegation we reject most vigorously. We have stated time and again that Tanzania has no interest in supporting armed attacks against Burundi or in harbouring, training or arming its opponents. We know we would be the very victims of such a policy. In addition, my Government has challenged the Burundi authorities to provide proof of their allegations. To date, no such evidence has been forthcoming, and it will not be, because the accusations are false and baseless. This notwithstanding, Tanzania is determined, as a responsible neighbour, to continue to honour its international obligations relating to the hosting of refugees and, together with the rest of the region, to strive for peace in Burundi. Their peace is also our peace.

Considerable progress had been made by the conclusion of the fourth session of the peace negotiations held at Arusha in July of this year. Indeed, we are informed that two of the committees have finished the bulk of their work. The follow-up consultations between the Government, the National Assembly, the Union pour le progrès national (UPRONA), the Parti pour le redressement national (PARENA), the Front pour la démocratie au Burundi (FRODEBU) and the Conseil national de défense de la démocratie (CNDD) — which were held at Dar es Salaam from 30 August to 12 September 1999 — were able to thrash out a number of issues in detail. The follow-up consultations that were scheduled to convene in mid-October could not be held due to the passing away of the Facilitator, Mwalimu Nyerere.

This is where we stand today. How, then, does Tanzania see the way forward? To us, the Arusha process has been able to give a framework to the Burundi parties to begin on the difficult but inescapable road to dialogue and accommodation. Tanzania believes that the search for peace and stability in Burundi is not a utopian effort. It is within the reach of the parties, if the progress made so far at Arusha is consolidated and expanded. We therefore see the way forward as follows.

First, as the negotiations process has reached a critical stage, it is important not to lose the momentum. It is quite possible that in this state of flux attempts could be made to create an impression that little of substance has been achieved and that, since a new facilitator is being sought, the process must be reconstituted anew and, worse still, restarted. We should not allow this to happen. We should instead ensure that the process of transition to another facilitator is managed in a manner that ensures the consolidation of the gains made in the process and its continuity.

Secondly, we see no reason why the negotiation process within the committees should not restart immediately. For even during the facilitation of Mwalimu Nyerere, the nitty-gritty of negotiations was done in those committees, which were established by the parties themselves. The committees, headed by individuals of great experience and integrity drawn from around the world, exist, and each has a specific mandate. The facilitator comes in as an overseer to the process and as a convener of the plenary sessions. In addition to the committees, there exists a structure of experts that has so far supported the work of the committees and assisted the facilitator. We see no reason why these too cannot continue to render services to the process even as the consultations to designate a new facilitator continue.

Thirdly, in addition to the formal structure of the committees, the major parties initiated informal consultations to complement the Arusha process. Again, there is no reason why that arrangement — which, at any rate, is not dependent on the facilitator — cannot continue.

Fourthly, as we aim at re-invigorating the process of negotiation, we are also concerned at the increasing level of armed activity in Burundi and the negative consequences this is having on peace and security in that country and on the negotiating process itself. It is therefore important to see how best the armed elements can rapidly be brought into the negotiating process as it proceeds. We need to speed up the consultations in these areas so as to bring an end to the violence in Burundi.

Fifthly, the Facilitator, the late Mwalimu, was designated by the region. As we speak, consultations are under way within the region on the designation of a successor facilitator. A regional summit planned to take place towards the end of this month will hopefully finalize this matter. The region is fully aware that in designating the new facilitator it will have to consult

extensively and to seek the concurrence of the Burundi parties, as well as of the international community at large, on the choice. The region is determined to ensure that an individual of stature who can inspire the full trust and confidence of the parties and who is capable of exercising effective and undivided superintendence over the negotiating process is designated as facilitator.

What, then, do we think the United Nations Security Council should be doing? My Government believes that an agreement in Burundi is possible only if the parties can be further nudged down the path of negotiation. We believe that the ground covered is considerable, even as we recognize that fundamental differences still stand in the way of that agreement. It is therefore important for the Council to come out unequivocally in support of the Arusha process and to continue to encourage the parties to persist in dialogue and to remain committed to the principle of a negotiated settlement. In this respect, the United Nations must remain positively implicated in the ongoing consultations on a way forward in the Great Lakes region.

Secondly, Tanzania believes that the Security Council must itself maintain and urge sustained support for the facilitation process and should also provide it with resources. I wish, in this regard, to express the gratitude of my Government, on behalf of the facilitation, to the countries and organizations that have until now extended financial and other support to the Arusha process. Such support has enabled many actors to take part in the Arusha talks, particularly the small parties in Burundi.

Thirdly, and lastly, my Government believes that the United Nations must make contingency preparations for the outcome of the Arusha process. We have learned in other situations how tragic it can be if we are not prepared. Burundi will need to be supported in the area of reconstruction and in building the institutions that will oversee the implementation of the peace process. The people of Burundi will need assistance as they rebuild, deal with the internally displaced and welcome and resettle those who are in exile as refugees. Above all, they will need the constant encouragement and support of the international community as they heal, rebuild trust and reconstruct a united and peaceful Burundi.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The next meeting to continue the consideration of this item will be held immediately following the adjournment of the present meeting.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.